

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03 ACDA-12
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02 ICA-11 TRSE-00 /072 W
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R 201014Z APR 78
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0904
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USLOSACLANT NORFOLK VA
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY ROME
USNMR SHAPE BE
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 04050

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, PO
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES MODERNIZATION

REFS: (A) STATE 96492 DTG 141933Z APR 78,
(B) USNATO 3546 DTG 071134Z APR 78 NOTAL,
(C) USNATO 3508 DTG 061646Z APR 78 NOTAL,
(D) LISBON 2900 DTG 171637Z APR 78 NOTAL
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1. AT THE APRIL 11, 1978, DRC MULTILATERAL REVIEW OF
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DRAFT FORCE GOALS FOR PORTUGAL THE CHAIRMAN (MUMFORD)
ANNOUNCED THAT A MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AID
TO PORTUGAL AND TURKEY WOULD BE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 27,
1978. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IS TO REVIEW PORTUGAL'S
REVISED NAVAL MODERNIZATION PLAN (REF B). WHILE WE
BELIEVE AD HOC COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES AT THE APRIL 27
MEETING COULD BE PERSUADED TO DISCUSS PORTUGUESE AIR

FORCE EQUIPMENT, WE THINK THAT THE TIMING OF THE DISCUSSION MAY NOT BE RIGHT.

2. AS WASHINGTON IS WELL AWARE, IT IS A LONG LEAP FROM COMMITTEE DISCUSSION TO ACTUAL COMMITMENT. WE BELIEVE THAT THE DISTANCE TO BE COVERED IS GREATER IF PROPER PREPARATORY/CORRIDOR WORK IS NOT CARRIED OUT, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ALLIES GENERALLY HAVE NOT INDICATED A STRONG INTEREST IN PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE FIGHTER ACQUISITION.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT BEFORE DETAILED DISCUSSION IS SCHEDULED IN THE AD HOC COMMITTEE WE SHOULD LAY THE GROUNDWORD AND SAMPLE POSSIBLE ALLIED RESPONSES TO ANY SUGGESTION FOR PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION. WE PROPOSE, THEREFORE, TO APPROACH MUMFORD PRIOR TO THE APRIL 27 MEETING TO SEE IF HE, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTUGUESE, WOULD ANNOUNCE THAT THE SUBJECT OF PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL AT A LATER MEETING. COMMENT: WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY AN IS REPRESENTATIVE THAT IT WILL BE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO SCHEDULE SUCH A MEETING PRIOR TO THE SUMMIT, BUT WE BELIEVE A MEETING COULD BE HELD IN JUNE. END COMMENT. FOLLOWING AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY MUMFORD TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM AT A LATER DATE WE WOULD PROPOSE WORK IN THE CORRIDOR TO ELICIT STRONGER ALLIED SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM. WE DOUBT HOWEVER THAT WE CAN DO ENOUGH HERE AT NATO TO MOVE THE PLEDGING PROCESS FORWARD
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SINCE, AS WASHINGTON HAS NOTED, MOST ALLIES SEEM CONTENT TO ALLOW THE US AND FRG TO TAKE THE LEAD WHILE OFFERING ONLY SMALL QUANTITIES OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT WHICH THE PORTUGUESE SERVICES OFTEN CONSIDER INADEQUATE IN AMOUNT, SOPHISTICATION AND UTILITY. THEREFORE, WE SUGGEST THAT AS WE WORK HERE, WASHINGTON PLAN TO PRESS THE NEED FOR ASSISTANCE BILATERALLY. WE BELIEVE THAT IN DOING SO THERE WOULD BE A BENEFICIAL EFFECT BY REMINDING ALLIED GOVERNMENTS IN THEIR CAPITALS OF PORTUGUESE NEEDS AND WILL PUT MORE STEAM BEHIND THE PROCESS AND RESULT IN A MORE EQUITABLE SHARING OF THE BURDEN IN THE LONG RUN.

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4. WITH REGARD TO PORTUGAL'S FIGHTER AIRCRAFT NEEDS, THERE WILL CLEARLY BE A GAP BETWEEN THE DESIRES OF THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE AS OUTLINED BY USDAO LISBON, THE ABILITY OF THE PORTUGUESE TO ABSORB SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT AND THE ABILITY OF NATO NATIONS TO PROVIDE THEM. BASED ON OUR REVIEW OF ALLIED AIRCRAFT INVENTORIES AND PLANS, WE SEE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF ANY USED AIRCRAFT SUITABLE FOR PORTUGUESE NEEDS COMING AVAILABLE SOON. WE JUDGE THAT THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE ALLIES WOULD BE THE PHASED OUT F-104'S (REF C). IN OUR

VIEW, THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE DIFFICULT AIRCRAFT TO TRAN-
SITION TO IN TERMS OF BOTH OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE;
HOWEVER, WE WOULD OF COURSE DEFER TO WASHINGTON AND MAAG
LISBON ON THIS QUESTION. GIVEN THESE FACTS, WE HAVE
SOME RESERVATION ABOUT PUSHING TOO HARD FOR AD HOC COM-
MITTEE DISCUSSION OF AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION UNTIL THE
US IS EITHER CERTAIN OF ITS OWN LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT OR
HAS IDENTIFIED AN ACCEPTABLE CANDIDATE AIRFRAME FROM
EXISTING ALLIED INVENTORIES, WHICH WOULD BE WITHIN PORTU-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 USNATO 04050

GUESE CAPABILITY TO ASSIMILATE.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON REACTION.GLITMAN

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